

IN THE CLAIMS

The claims are reproduced below for the Examiner's convenience:

Claim 1 (Previously Presented): Beads of expandable vinylaromatic polymers consisting of

- a) a matrix obtained by polymerizing 50-100% by weight of one or more vinylaromatic monomers and 0-50% by weight of at least one copolymerizable monomer;
- b) 1-10% by weight, calculated with respect to the polymer (a), of an expanding agent englobed in the polymeric matrix,
- c) 2 ppm-2% by weight, calculated with respect to the polymer (a), of an anti-lumping additive, distributed only on the surface of the beads,
wherein the anti-lumping additive is a least one selected from the group consisting of Fe₂O₃ and esters of C₈₋₂₅ fatty acids with Fe.

Claim 2 (Original): The beads of expandable vinylaromatic polymers according to claim 1, having an average molecular weight Mw ranging from 50,000 to 250,000.

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): The beads of expandable vinylaromatic polymers according to claim 1, wherein the beads are substantially spherical with an average diameter ranging from 0.2 to 2 mm.

Claim 4 (Canceled).

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): A process for the preparation of beads of expandable vinylaromatic polymers which comprises comprising:

- polymerizing 50-100% by weight of one or more vinylaromatic monomers and 0-50% by weight of at least one co-polymerizable monomer;
- englobing an expanding agent in the polymeric matrix; and
- distributing only on the surface of the beads obtained 2 ppm-2% by weight, calculated with respect to the polymer, of an anti-lumping additive, wherein the anti-lumping additive is a least one selected from the group consisting of Fe₂O₃ and esters of C₈₋₂₅ fatty acids with Fe, to form the beads of the expandable vinylaromatic polymers,

wherein the beads consist of

- a) a matrix obtained by the polymerizing of the vinylaromatic monomers and the copolymerizable monomer;
- b) 1-10% by weight, calculated with respect to the polymer (a), of the expanding agent englobed in the matrix, and
- c) 2 ppm-2% by weight, calculated with respect to the polymer (a), of the anti-lumping additive, distributed only on the surface of the beads.

Claim 6 (Original): The process according to claim 5, wherein the polymerization is carried out in aqueous suspension or in continuous mass.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 5, wherein the polymerization is carried out in suspension in the presence of a suspending agent, an initiating system and an expanding system.

Claim 8 (Original): The process according to claim 7, wherein the expanding system consists of liquid substances with a boiling point ranging from 10 to 100°C.

Claim 9 (Canceled).

Claim 10 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 5, wherein the anti-lumping additive is a powder with an average particle-size ranging from 0.1 to 50 µm.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): Beads of one or more expandable or vinylaromatic polymers, comprising:

- a) a polymeric matrix obtained by polymerizing a mixture comprising 50-100% by weight of one or more vinylaromatic monomers and 0-50% by weight of at least one copolymerizable monomer;
- b) 1-10% by weight, calculated with respect to the polymeric matrix a), of an expanding agent englobed in the polymeric matrix; and
- c) 2 ppm-2% by weight, calculated with respect to the polymer matrix a), of at least one oxide of a metal of group VIIIB.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): The beads according to claim 11, wherein the expandable vinylaromatic polymers have an average molecular weight Mw of from 50,000 to 250,000.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): The beads according to claim 11, wherein the beads are substantially spherical and have an average diameter of from 0.2 to 2 mm.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): The beads according to claim 11, further comprising one or more fillers of an athermanous material in an amount of from 0.05 to 25% by weight.

Claim 15 (Withdrawn): The beads according to claim 1, further comprising an amine-containing coating present on the surface of the bead between the surface of the bead and the anti-lumping additive.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): The beads according to claim 11, wherein the anti-lumping additive is Fe₂O₃.

Claim 17 (Previously Presented): A process for preparing the beads according to claim 11, comprising:
polymerizing a mixture comprising from 50-100% by weight of one or more vinyl aromatic monomers and from 0-50% by weight of at least one copolymerizable monomer to form the polymeric matrix;
englobing the expanding agent in the polymeric matrix; and
distributing the anti-lumping additive on the surface of the beads.

Claim 18 (Withdrawn): The process according to claim 17, further comprising:
coating the beads with a liquid antistatic agent selected from the group consisting of an amine, a tertiary alkyl amine, and an ethylene oxide-propylene oxide copolymer before distributing the anti-lumping additive on the surface of the beads.

Claim 19 (Withdrawn): The beads according to claim 15, consisting of the matrix, the expanding agent, the anti-lumping additive, and the anti-static agent.

Claim 20 (Previously Presented): The beads of expandable vinylaromatic polymers according to claim 1, wherein the anti-lumping additive is Fe₂O₃.

Claim 21 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 5, wherein the anti-lumping additive is Fe₂O₃.

Claim 22 (Canceled).

Claim 23 (Previously Presented): The beads of expandable vinyl aromatic polymer according to Claim 1, wherein the anti-lumping additive is a C₈₋₂₅ ester of a fatty acid with Fe.

Claim 24 (Previously Presented): The beads of expandable vinyl aromatic polymer according to Claim 5, wherein the anti-lumping additive is a C₈₋₂₅ ester of a fatty acid with Fe.

Claim 25 (Previously Presented): The beads of expandable vinyl aromatic polymer according to Claim 11, wherein the anti-lumping additive is a C₈₋₂₅ ester of a fatty acid with Fe.

Claim 26 (Previously Presented): The beads of expandable vinyl aromatic polymer according to Claim 11, wherein the matrix is an expandable polymer matrix.